

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 231543

FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 13932 ACTION SECSTATE 17 OCT

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13932

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, IN
SUBJ: NARCOTICS COUNTRY ASSESSMENT FOR INDIA

REF: STATE 226823

1. AS REQUESTED IN REFTTEL, WE SUGGEST REVISIONS TO THE TEXT OF
THE NARCOTICS COUNTRY ASSESSMENT FOR INDIA, TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

2. SIGNIFICANCE: INDIA IS SIGNIFICANT AS AN OPIUM PRODUCER AND
PROCESSOR. INDIA IS BY FAR THE WORLD'S LARGEST PRODUCER OF LEGAL
OPIUM, HAVING PRODUCED NEARLY 1,000 TONS IN 1974, OF WHICH 850
TONS WERE MADE AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT. INDIA HAS A WELL-ESTABLISHED
CONTROL AND MARKETING SYSTEM FOR LEGAL OPIUM. THE OPIUM GUM IS
COLLECTED, PROCESSED, AND SOLD UNDER GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION, AND
INDIAN OFFICIALS CLAIM THAT DIVERSION INTO ILLICIT CHANNELS IS
MINIMAL. MOST EXPERTS AGREE THAT INDIAN CONTROLS ARE REASONABLY
EFFECTIVE, AND WHILE INTERNAL DIVISION MAY BE AS MUCH AS 10 PER-
CENT, MOST LEAKAGE IS ABSORBED BY DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION. SOME
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OPIUM IS REPORTEDLY SMUGGLED INTO INDIA FROM PAKISTAN AND POSSIBLY

FROM BURMA. THERE IS SOME ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN OPIUM FROM INDIA TO SRI LANKA AND THE PERSIAN GULF EMIRATES, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT MORE THAN A FEW KILOS REACH THE US ANNUALLY. THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL TRANSSHIPMENT OF NEPALESE HASHISH THROUGH INDIA TO THE US AND EUROPE.

PROBLEM: INDIA MUST BALANCE SUBSTANTIAL OPIUM PRODUCTION FOR WORLD MEDICINAL CONSUMPTION AND DANGER OF LEAKAGE OF THIS OPIUM INTO INTERNATIONAL CHANNELS. THE PRESENT CONTROL SYSTEM COULD COME UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE IF INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKERS TURN TO INDIA AS A MAJOR SOURCE OF ILLICIT OPIUM. INDIA IS VIEWED BY U.N. OFFICIALS AS THE MOST FEASIBLE SOURCE OF OPIUM TO MEET THE PRESENT AND EXPANDING PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS OF THE WORLD. INDIA, HOWEVER, IS RELUCTANT TO INCREASE PRODUCTION FOR FEAR OF STRAINING ITS CONTROL CAPABILITIES. THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS COOPERATING WITH THE US IN SEEKING TO CONTROL THE ILLICIT HASHISH TRAFFIC, BUT IS RELUCTANT PUBLICLY TO ADMIT THE EXTENT OF ILLICIT OPIUM SMUGGLING.

PROSPECTS: INDIAN GUM OPIUM PRODUCTION WILL PROBABLY REMAIN STATIC. THERE WILL BE SOME EXPORTS OF CODEINE FROM 1975 ONWARD. INDIA DOES INTEND TO DEVELOP AN INCISED POPPY STRAW INDUSTRY; THE INITIAL PLANT IS EXPECTED TO GO ON STREAM IN 1978. IN THE MEANTIME, INDIA WILL EXPORT ABOUT 10,000 TONS OF POPPY STRAW EACH YEAR. THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY INTENTION TO SHIFT ENTIRELY TO POPPY STRAW, HOWEVER. US-INDIAN COOPERATION IN OPIUM MATTERS PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE, ESPECIALLY IN EXCHANGING INFORMATION ABOUT ILLICIT TRAFFIC.

MOYNIHAN UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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